detected for holding forged travel documents at major airports in the country in the last three years is as under :

Years	No. of cases
1997	1903
1998	1735
1999	1469

(b) and (c) passports are being issued with due police verification which inter aha, establishes the Indian nationahty of the apphcant. If a passport is issued on post-pohce verification basis or police report over due basis and if the subsequent police report is adverse then the passport is revoked or impounded.

Among the new measures proposed in the coming months are introduction of machine writing of passport booklets initially at the Regional Passport Office, Delhi and transfer of personal particulars of passport holders from Index Cards to CD-ROMs which would facilitate checking of records.

(d) As per the Passport Act, 1967 the passport fee is to be prescribed to meet all the expenditure of issuing passports. The present passport fee regime was fixed in 1993. The fee needs to be revised now to meet the normal rise in the costs since 1993 and to cover the expenditure on modernization and computerization of passport offices.

Passports Issued without Police Scrutiny

2955. SHRI SHIBU SOREN: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem captioned '50 percent of passports issued sans police scrutiny' published in the Hindu dated 2nd March, 2000;

(b) if so, the details of the alarming large number of passports being issued by the Regional Passport Office, Hyderabad without prior police verification of the applicant's antecedents;

(c) the reasons, therefor; and

(d) what action is/has been taken by the Government in this regard and action taken against the responsible officials in this connection ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) To facilitate timely issue of passports by reducing the delays due to the time taken for police verification, since 1990 the government has allowed some passports to be issued on police report overdue basis if the police report is delayed for more than four weeks. In cases where a negative police report is received subsequently such passport applicants are contacted for clariflcation and where necessary, the passports are revoked or impounded.

(d) The Government remains vigilant in the grant of passports and strives to simplify the procedure for the issue of passports while keeping the security considerations in view. The officials of RPO, Hyderabad have acted as per the rules and no action is proposed against them.

Discussions with US President

2956. SHRI CM. IBRAHIM :

SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD ;

SHRI J. CHITHARANIAN :

SHRI NAGENDRA NATH OJHA :

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether during the recent visit of the US President to New Delhi contentious issues like CTBT and Kashmir were kept only as sub-text and issues about convergence in Science and Technology, US interest in India in Indian information technology were mainly discussed;

(b) if so, what was the outcome of the discussions on the different contentions and other issues like US interests in Indian Information Technology; **and**

(c) the details of the other discussions took place with US President along with the outcome thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Both sides regarded the visit of President Clinton to India as an opportunity to open a new chapter in bilateral relations and to build a closer and qualitatively new relationship on the basis of equality and mutual respect. The two sides discussed all aspects of bilateral